

Message Text

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73

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 AID-20 OMB-01 RSR-01 /130 W
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R 251115 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5170

INFO AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 0754

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, DM

SUBJECT: SENTENCING OF DAHOMEAN " COUP" PLOTTERS

REF: COTONOU 0730

STATE 099453

1. FINAL INSTALLMENT OF OFFICIAL VERSION COURT- MARTIAL PROCEEDINGS
AGAINST THOSE ACCUSED OF PLANNING COUNTER- COUP AND ARRESTED
FEBRUARY 28 WAS PUBLISHED IN DAHO- EXPRESS MAY 24. NOTHING
STARTLING CONTAINED IN EVIDENCE AS PUBLISHED. CASE BASED ALMOST
EXCLUSIVELY ON TESTIMONY OF SINGLE
WITNESS, ADJUDANT BIO SOUAIBOU,
OF ELITE OUIDAH- BASED UNIT OF ARMY. ALLEGEDLY, PRINCIPAL PLOTTERS,
COL. ALLEY, COMMANDANT HACHEME AND EX- COMMANDANT CHABI IBRAHIM,
ATTEMPTED USE SOUAIBOUT TO NEUTRALIZE OUIDAH UNITS WHICH ARE STILL
UNDER COMMAND OF MIN. INT., CAPT AIKPE, AND MIN. FIN.,
CAPT ASSOGBA. PLOTTERS THEN PURPORTEDLY PLANNED KILL AIKPE
AND ASSOGBA IN COTONOU AND DETAIN KEREKOU. SHOULD LATTER
RESIST, HE TOO WAS TO BE ELIMINATED.

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2. ALLEY, HACHEME AND CHABI SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS OF SOLITARY CONFINEMENT WITH EXPULSION FROM ARMY AND LOSS OF CIVIL RIGHTS ON CHARGES OF PLOTTING AGAINST SECURITY OF STATE AND ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF ARMS. PAUL KPONOU AND SGT. JOSEPH GAUNOU BAKO WERE SENTENCED TO TEN YEARS HARD LABOR FOR PROVEN COMPLICITY. LOUIS FELIHO, ALEXIS AGBO AND ADJUDANT- CHEF MARC SOGBO SENTENCED TO FIVE YEARS EACH FOR SUSPECTED COMPLICITY. CHARGES WERE DISMISSED AGAINST CHIEF OF STAFF OF GENDARMERIE, COMMANDANT ISSA RAIMI LAWANI, ADJUDANT- CHEF ERNEST AHO, ADJUDANT ROGER HACHEME, AND ADJUDANT YESSOUFOU SAUROU ON BASIS INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE AGAINST THEM. HOWEVER, COURT WARNED THEY MAY STILL BE SUBJECT TO DISCIPLINE BY THEIR MILITARY SUPERIORS. OTHERS DETAINED IN CASE, INCLUDING SINGLE FRENCHMAN, MARCEL LAFFITE, WERE CLEARED OF ALL CHARGES. IN SECOND " PARALLEL PLOT," ONE ALLEGED PLOTTER, PIERRE AMOUSSOU, WAS SENTENCED TO TWO YEARS IN PRISON. SUPPOSEDLY, THIS PLOT WAS BEING HATCHED INDEPENDENTLY OF ALLEY COUP BY SUPPORTERS OF ONE OF FORMER MEMBERS PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL, PROBABLY ABOMADEGBE.

3. DESPITE CURSORY CONFESSIONS OF COMPLICITY BY ALLEY, HACHEME AND CHABI, PUBLISHED EVIDENCE OF PLOT CONSTITUTING SERIOUS THREAT TO REGIME IS NOT CONVINCING. FACT THAT THERE WERE NO DEATH SENTENCES AND TWENTY- ONE OF ACCUSED ACQUITTED WOULD TEND SUPPORT THESIS THAT PLOT NOT TAKEN TOO SERIOUSLY BY OFFICERS OF ARMY AND GENDARMERIE WHO SAT ON COURTS MARTIAL. SENTENCING HAS CAUSED LITTLE SITR IN CAPITAL WHERE CONTINUATION OF NON-SANGUINARY DAHOMEAN TRADITIONS HAS BEEN WELCOMED.
ANDERSON

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NMAFVVZCZ

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